

The Hit'em Back Raid

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1. Chapter 1

****The Hit'em Back Raid****

By: AliasCWN Chapter 1

{Note: I realize that some of the men are out of their timeline but I didn't want to change it because this story follows my other ones and I wanted to keep the characters the same. Forgive me followers of Combat.}

Chip Saunders placed his men along the heavy brush row. They had their orders, keep the Germans from advancing as long as possible. They could hear the enemy trucks on the road drawing closer and closer. Saunders ducked deeper into his foxhole and mentally reviewed the locations of each of his men.

Cage and Kirby he knew had dug in on his right. Billy and Littlejohn were off to his left. He hoped Doc stayed in his foxhole behind him. The medic was dedicated and had a habit of putting himself in danger to save the men. A consideration they all appreciated but Saunders had been trying to curb. A dead medic was no good to anyone.

The lines of Germans appeared in their gunsights. Saunders waited until they were close before he fired the first shot. As the first soldier fell Saunders was already firing at the next one. Bullets whipped through the brush all around him as the weapons of his men joined the fight.

The Germans were being urged on by their officers. They came in waves, each wave covering the next as they advanced. Saunders felt a stinging pain in his shoulder. Looking down, he could see the blood already soaking his shirt.

A cry to his right sent Doc scurrying to help Kirby. The private was clutching his left arm trying to staunch the flow of blood as Doc reached him. The medic applied a pressure bandage and looked toward the sargent. Saunders gave him a nod and Doc grabbed Kirby by his good arm and helped him to his feet. With Cage and Saunders giving them cover fire, Doc and Kirby made their way to the rear of the line.

Littlejohn was the next to get hit. At the okay from his sargent he limped back to join Kirby.

The Germans were still pushing hard, urged on by an officer. Saunders watched him wave his arm at some of his troopers, sending them to try to flank the Americans. Yelling a warning to his own men, Saunders took aim at the officer. The next time the man rose to goad his men forward, Saunders was waiting. He fired one shot, hitting the officer in the chest. He fell forward, into the open, and didn't move.

The death of the officer spurred the Germans to fight harder. They were closing in on the American line, pushing them back. Saunders motioned his men to move to the rear. One by one they retreated to their second prepared line of defense. Kirby was back in the fight using his left arm gingerly. Littlejohn was still in the rear but not out of it by any means.

A grenade landed near Saunders, forcing him to duck. The Germans used that time to move closer to his position. Cage, seeing what was happening, yelled a warning to the sargent and tossed a grenade of his own. The shrapnel rattled the brush all around Saunders but the firing from directly in front of him stopped.

Throwing the grenade drew the Germans attention to Cage. Now he had to stay down as they peppered his position with lead. Saunders tossed one of his grenades in an attempt to give Cage some relief.

Billy yelled a warning from his position to the sargents left. Two enemy soldiers had managed to get through the line. Saunders opened fire as the soldiers turned toward Billy and Billy ducked. He kept his aim high knowing Billy would lie low. Both Germans jerked like marionette dolls on strings and crumpled to the ground.

Saunders called to his men and had them fall back to their next preselected line of defense. The Germans were losing men but they still outnumbered the Americans three to one. Sawyer gave a shrill cry and rolled behind a boulder, his arm hanging useless after being hit in the shoulder.

There was a pause in the firing as the Germans regrouped. Saunders could plainly hear the officers shouting orders but he didn't speak German. Using the pause to check on his own men, he found them taking advantage of the break to check clips and reinforce their foxholes. His own shoulder was starting to bother him. Without the rush of battle he was finding it hard to block out the pain. He considered calling Doc and having his shoulder patched but a renewed attack ended those thoughts. Another officer had taken command and he was once again pushing his men to overrun the Americans.

Saunders was kept too busy to worry about his shoulder as soldier after soldier tried to get past him. Cage hissed to get his

attention. When he turned Cage saw his shoulder. The cajuns' eyes opened wide in surprise and concern.

"Sarge, you better have Doc take a look at that."

Saunders shook his head. His helmet slid down over his eyes and he pushed it up with one finger. "What do you want?"

The Cajun hesitated, his eyes on the sergeants shoulder.

"Cage?"

Cage jerked back to the problem at hand. "Oh, I'm almost out of ammo. Do you have any extra?"

Saunders reached into his pocket and pulled out two clips. He tossed them across to Cage and ducked as a bullet whizzed past his head. "We're going to have to fall back again. There are just too many of them. Second squad is just over the next ridge. We can join up with them and hold the line there."

Cage nodded as he shoved the new clip into his rifle.

"You lead out. Take the others. I'll follow." Saunders turned back to fire at the Germans who were regrouping again. "Get going."

With a final look at his sargent Cage pulled back, calling softly to the others. One by one they withdrew over the top of the ridge.

"Sarge." Cage let his sargent know that they were all safely over the crest of the ridge.

Saunders fired one final burst and turned. Ducking low, he prepared to follow his men. With Cage covering him, he ran. The Germans opened fire from all along the line. Cage tried to force them to seek shelter but he couldn't cover them all. A bullet caught Saunders in the back. As he fell he heard Cage yell. He could hear the scout firing wildly. Several more rifles joined the fight as more of his men returned to help Cage. In the end it didn't matter as Saunders fell to his knees and then onto his face. The burning in his back intensified until he couldn't stand it anymore. Everything became quiet. He couldn't hear the gunshots or the shouting. He never heard Cage and the others screaming his name. The light faded and his whole world turned black as he gave into the urge to let go.

2. Chapter 2

****The Hit'em Back Raid -Chapter 2****

Cage watched in horror as Sargent Saunders jerked under the impact of the bullet. He screamed his name even as he emptied his clip trying to drive the Germans back. He gathered his feet under him, ready to make a dash toward the fallen man. A hand grabbed his arm. He tried to pull away but Kirby refused to let go.

"It's too late Cage. There's nothing we can do." Kirby pulled on his arm. "You're in charge now. You have to get us out of here."

Cage turned and snarled at his friend. He wanted to scream at him for interfering. Only the look on Kirby's face stopped him. With a jolt he realized that the other soldier felt the same loss and anger that he felt. Frustrated and helpless to do anything about it, he relented. Knowing that the squad was now his responsibility, he tried to get his head back into the fight.

"Pull them back. We have to join Second squad." Kirby nodded and picked up the weapon he had dropped to grab Cage. He slid off the hill and went to gather the rest of the men. Calling to the others, they began to fall back, hoping they wouldn't get overrun before they got there.

Second squad was dug in just where Saunders had said they would be. Cage called out before exposing himself or his men. Second squad's sargent met them as they crossed the defense line.

"Who's in charge?"

"I am." Cage answered.

"Where's Saunders?" The way every head dropped and everyone refused to meet his eyes gave him his answer. He sighed in regret before he nodded. "Okay, get your wounded over to medical and the rest of you men fill in wherever you find a spot."

"Sargent, we're almost out of ammunition. We burned up a lot holding them as long as we did. "

The sargent nodded in understanding. "Okay, we have some extra in that house over there. Load up and get back over here. From the sounds of things, those krauts aren't quite ready to surrender."

Cage nodded and passed the orders on. The wounded were treated and the ammo resupplied. As Cage came out of the house he found Kirby, Littlejohn and Sawyer waiting.

"You guys can get some rest." He told them as he tried to walk past. They stood their ground and refused to move.

"We don't want to rest. We want to reload and go get those guys who got Sarge." Kirby thrust his jaw out and dared Cage to argue.

"Alright, but hurry up, they'll be here any minute." Cage wasn't about to try to talk them out of it. They were ready and back on the line less than five minutes later. With the help of Second squad they held the position. The Germans were stopped on the ridge. The numbers were not so one-sided now and the Americans refused to move any further.

"What happened to Saunders?" Lieutenant Hanley had arrived and taken command. Once he had inspected the defenses he had set up a command post. Cage stood in front of the lieutenant and gave his report.

"He was falling back to join us when he took a bullet in the back. He'd already been hit in the shoulder. He was too far away for us to get to him. They overran him before we could drive them back."

"Any chance he's still alive?"

Cage shook his head sadly. "I don't know Lieutenant. Like I said, he was hit in the shoulder and then in the back. I tried to cover him, but once he fell, he didn't move. They drove us back and we lost sight of him." Cage hoped for a moment that Saunders had survived before he let reality take over. The odds were against the sargent. Even if he had survived the injury, it was unlikely that the Germans would take time to get him a doctor. And without a doctor, there was no way that he would live for long.

"Okay Cage, I'll file the report. For now, we'll list him as MIA. Go get some rest."

Cage left the officer feeling frustrated and guilty. In his head he knew he couldn't have done anything differently but the guilt refused to go away.

"Will the L.T. let us go look for Sarge?" Billy cornered him as soon as he returned.

"No. The krauts control everything on that side of the ridge. Nobody is going over there."

"What about Sarge?"

"The Lieutenant is going to list him as MIA."

Billy looked stricken. None of the others spoke.

"The Lieutenant says for us to get some rest. We have to hold this ridge." Cage headed for his bedroll. The others followed, looking dejected.

Over the next two weeks the Germans made repeated efforts to take the ridge but the Americans had gotten reinforcements. First and Second squad of King Company were the heart of the resistance. They refused to give up any more ground. Kirby, Littlejohn and Sawyer healed and returned to full duty. Lt. Hanley left Cage in charge of the squad until Cage ask to be relieved. When the new replacements arrived, First squad got a new sargent.

Sgt. Mac McConnell took over three weeks after the battle that took Sgt. Saunders. The men were quiet around him, respectful but not warm. The solemn mood lasted well after his arrival.

3. Chapter 3

****The Hit'em Back Raid****

Chapter 3

"Does everyone understand the plan?" Sgt. Sam Troy spoke to the men of K Company. First squad, headed by Lt. Hanley and Sgt. Mc Connell were crowded around the table at headquarters.

"It sounds crazy to me." Mac McConnell said with feeling.

"But crazy works for them." Cage started the reply but it ended as a chorus of voices. First squad smiled at the familiar phrase. Even Hanley got the joke. McConnell felt like an outsider, not only with this new team, but with his own squad as well. It had been obvious from the very beginning that Sgt. Saunders had left very big shoes to fill.

"We did something like this before Sargent. We drove seven trucks across the desert and right up to the prison camp and blew the front gate. The Germans were not expecting anything of the sort." Troy explained the new mission they had been assigned. Once again they were on loan to the commanders of K Company to help pull off a difficult mission. The Germans were expected to make another push in the near future. The Americans, already weakened by the previous assaults, needed an edge to defeat them. Their answer was to free the prisoners of a POW camp and have them attack the advancing Germans from behind while the American forces held them from the front. Someone had heard of Troys' success in another raid and had suggested they call on them again.

"How do you plan to get the trucks full of weapons and supplies past the Germans and behind their lines?" Hanley trusted the plan but he wanted the details.

"We're going to drive them right through their roadblocks." Moffitt said with a smile. "We have forged travel papers that will get us past the checkpoints."

"Moffitt will pose as a German officer. Some of the others will dress as Germans and drive the trucks. The rest will hide in the back. The story is that they are captured supplies that we are moving behind the lines to keep them away from the Americans. Once the supplies are through we have other papers that state we have orders to move the POWs to another camp. The ruse is that High Command is expecting a lot of new prisoners once the new push starts. The trucks will drive right into the camp to pick up the prisoners, only they won't be empty when they arrive." Troy made the plan sound easy.

Hanley smiled at the other man. "And I suppose that you want some of my men to pose as Germans?"

"Volunteers only." Troy answered, suddenly solemn. "Remember, anyone caught in a German uniform can be shot as a spy."

The room was silent for only a moment as the men looked at each other, then they all volunteered. Hanley wasn't surprised at their willingness.

"Alright Sargent, you have your volunteers. Now how do you plan to let the prisoners know what you have planned."

"Tully's going to tell them."

Hanley raised an eyebrow.

"He's going to get captured. Once inside he'll tell the highest ranking officer the plan and they can be ready." Troy shrugged at the Lieutenants' look. "He volunteered."

"Well I hope the highest ranking officer is on our side." McConnell

muttered under his breath.

Troy glared at him. "Don't worry about my men."

"We've worked with them before Sargent. They do their part, we do ours. Keep your eyes open Mac, you're about to see something." The Lieutenant gave McConnell a friendly warning before turning his attention back to the map. "Troy, do we have written orders for the POWs?"

"Yes. Headquarters want them to attack the Germans from the rear at predetermined points. We have some weak points that need some support. I'll give you the packets since you're the one who will be dealing with their officers. Once we free the prisoners, my men and I will become couriers to help coordinate the troop movements. You and your men will join the POWs. If there is a need for our services we will be available."

"Just what do you do?" McConnell ask in a sarcastic tone,

"Whatever needs to be done Sargent. We specialize in sabotage and just general sneakiness. You might call us the wild cards in this deck." The briefing was ended with a warning. "This is not going to be a cakewalk. Anyone who wants to opt out needs to do it before we leave. No blame, no hard feelings. We leave this afternoon. If you want out, let us know within the hour so we can adapt our plans." The men all nodded and shuffled out the door. Troy watched them go with a frown.

"Something wrong Sargent?" Hanley hung back after his men departed.

"Just thinking Lieutenant. That new Sargent you have doesn't seem too keen on this mission. And the men don't seem to be backing him like they did Saunders."

"Saunders was one heck of a sargent." Hanley reasoned. "It's been tough trying to replace him. Mac just needs more time. The men respect him, they just aren't real comfortable with him yet."

Troy understood the value of knowing your teammates. He nodded his understanding. "Just the same Lieutenant, I'll be keeping my eye on him."

"Of course." Hanley returned with a smile. "Saunders would have done the same." He began to gather the maps, folding them to put in the waterproof bags.

"Lieutenant.." Troy stopped him as he turned to leave, "I'm sorry about Saunders. I know you two were friends."

"Yeah, thanks." Hanley picked up the bags and left the room.

"Do you think that new sargent will be a problem Sam?" Moffitt watched the lieutenant leave. "We could leave him behind."

"No we can't Jack. That would undermine his authority. He'd never be able to lead that crew."

"Then we'll just have to convince him that this plan will

work."

"And that we can do the job." Tully added.

"How do we do that?" Hitch ask.

"We do our job." Troy replied.

4. Chapter 4

****The Hit'em Back Raid ****

****Chapter 4****

Tully Pettigrew arrived at the prison camp along with four other men. The Germans had captured him as he pretended to scout their lines. He climbed out of the truck and walked meekly into the prison yard. The guards untied his hands and left him standing among the other POWs. He looked the camp over before approaching a soldier who had been watching him.

"My name is Tully Pettigrew. I need to speak with the highest ranking officer in this camp."

The POW stared at Tully in silence.

"Did you hear me?" Tully wondered if he had picked someone with mental problems to approach.

"I heard you." The man finally responded. "Wait here." The soldier walked away without a backward glance.

Tully watched him leave with a shake of his head. It was not exactly the reception he had expected. He leaned against the corner of one of the barracks and watched the other prisoners go about their normal routines. The other prisoners gave him curious looks as they passed, some nodding a greeting. Tully waited patiently for his summons to the commanders barracks. At last a different soldier came to get him.

"Follow me." The soldier walked away in the direction the first soldier had gone. Tully followed.

"Private Pettigrew is it?" Tully nodded. "I understand you want to talk to me. I am Major John Monroe." The major studied Tully as he stood in front of him. "What is it you want Private?"

Tully glanced around the room at all the soldiers watching the meeting. "Can you trust everyone here? I mean really trust them?" Tully watched the Majors' eyes narrow as he opened his mouth to answer. Then he closed it and gave Tully a measuring look. Finally he took a moment to consider the question. Tully liked that he didn't just blurt out an answer.

"I trust everyone here but you Private." The major finally answered with a smile. "Suppose you tell me what this is all about."

"Escape Sir." Tully let the answer sink in.

The majors' smile turned to a frown. He studied the young soldier before him. The lad seemed to be completely serious and didn't seem to be suffering from any wounds. There was an air of confidence about him that was hard to dismiss.

"Everyone wants to escape Private."

"Good." Tully smiled.

"It's not as easy as it sounds Private. Is there a reason why you think you need to escape on your first day here?"

The private smiled confidently. "I am going to escape Sir. Today, during the evening meal." Tully smiled at the officers stunned expression.

"Just like that?"

"Well Sir, I do have a little help on the way. I was wondering if you all want to come with me. We can't force anyone to come."

Again the major was stunned speechless as the private grinned broadly.

"What exactly are you saying?" The major waved the other men in the room to silence as they began to whisper among themselves.

"I've been sent in to tell you that there is prison break set for this evening. I am to give you a heads up so you can make plans for the takeover of this camp. Once we do that, Lt. Gil Hanley has orders from headquarters for you and your POWs." Tully waited as the major processed the information. The next question was one he had anticipated but had hoped not to hear.

"How do we know we can trust you? We don't have any idea who you are or where you came from. Do you know anyone in this camp? Anyone know you?"

Tully shook his head no to all the questions. "I'm not stationed around here usually. I don't guess anyone here would have any reason to know me. The only guys who might know me are on the outside. You'll just have to take my word for it."

The door opened behind Tully. The major nodded at whoever had entered but quickly returned his eyes to Tully.

"I don't know you Private. You're asking me to risk the lives of over five hundred men on a stranger that nobody knows." Tully was disappointed as the major started to turn away. He was preparing to argue when the man behind him spoke.

"I know him." At the sound of the voice Tully spun on his heel, smiling broadly in welcome.

"Sarge! We thought you were dead!"

Saunders smiled weakly. "Close Private but no cigar. Don't get me wrong, they tried." Saunders shrugged his shoulder gingerly. "One in the shoulder and one in the back. A doc patched me up and they sent me here." Saunders studied the man before him. "Don't tell me you

volunteered to get captured."

"Sure." Tully grinned happily. "Somebody had to tell the Major the plan."

"Why not Hitchcock?"

"He was busy planting the explosives. We have some pretty impressive fireworks planned for this evening. We get a front row seat."

"I don't mean to interrupt your little reunion, but do you know this man Sargent?"

"Yes Sir. Private Pettigrew is part of a commando team that has worked with my squad twice before. You can trust him Sir. If he's here then something is about to happen. It usually does when they show up."

"Did you hear the outrageous claims he's making?" A captain behind the major ask indignantly.

"If I were you Sir, I'd believe every word. The information we got on them before our first mission with them said that they have never failed to complete a mission. As far as I know, that record still stands. The assignments we helped them with seemed pretty improbable if not impossible, but we pulled them off." Saunders smiled at Tully.

"It sure is good to see you Sargent. And I know a bunch of guys who will be even happier." Tully turned to the major. "I can tell you what is going to happen tonight. You and your guys will be armed. You'll have to take the surviving Germans and capture the munitions building. We'll take out the barracks and the mess hall. That should account for most of the guards. You have headquarters and the guard towers. We'll have six men here in German uniforms. Five truck drivers and an officer. You'll need to alert your men Major. Don't shoot my friends." Tully's smile disappeared at the last statement. The Major saw the look in his eyes and took the warning to heart.

"Just let us know where they'll be and how to tell them from the Germans."

"Once the explosives go off our guys will put a bright blue band around their right arm. They'll be by the trucks handing out weapons and ammo. You might want to get them some help to speed things up."

The Major nodded.

"Sarge, you stay with me. The guys will be looking for me. They're looking for you too but were told not to get their hopes up. If they spot you right away they can get back to concentrating on their jobs."

Saunders eyed Tully expectantly. "My squad's out there?"

"You told us to ask for you guys whenever we work around here. If you didn't want to work with us you shouldn't have said that. Anyway, we did, they are, and they're going to be one happy bunch, believe

me."

"Which ones are out there?"

"All of them."

"All?"

"All Sarge. Kirby, Littlejohn, and Sawyer were wounded when you got hit but they're all fine now. Lt. Hanley and Sgt. McConnell have been taking good care of them for you." Saunders nodded gratefully.

"So why don't we go over the plans from the beginning?" The Major nodded his approval and Tully started at the beginning and explained the entire plan, step by step. He explained how they had gotten the trucks through the German lines. He listed the weapons they were bringing, the plan to park them in front of the gates. He told them about the plan to hit the advancing Germans from behind as they began their new assault. He gave them every bit of information he possessed. By the time he was done, the Major and his officers had a plan in place. They started sending men to the other barracks to spread the word.

5. Chapter 5

****The Hit'em Back Raid ****

Chapter 5

The guards had just sat down for their evening meal when a fight broke out among the POWs. The guards on duty rushed to watch with orders not to interfere unless it spilled out toward the gate. They lined the fence in front of the prison yard.

A string of five trucks rolled into the compound and parked between the main office and the gates to the prison yard. Jack Moffitt climbed out of the first truck followed by Mark Hitchcock. Both were dressed as Germans. Moffitt called an order in German to the other truck drivers who nodded and remained in their trucks. Hitchcock stopped by the front of his truck as Moffitt spoke to him. Moffitt turned toward the main office and pulled some papers out of his tunic. He called to the guard by the door and waved the papers in his face. The guard nodded and led the British sargent into the building. Moffitt handed his papers to the enlisted man at the first desk and was ushered into the commandants office.

The fight was as far from the gate as the prisoners could get. There was a large crowd watching and cheering the combatants. When the explosion ripped through the mess hall they all hit the ground. The truck drivers hurled hand grenades at the gates, killing the guards standing there watching the fight. The wire gates hung on twisted hinges. The drivers grabbed rifles and began to fire at the guard towers. More explosions tore through the guards barracks. Gunfire inside the main office was Hitchcocks' cue to take out the guard at the door. Moffitt tossed a grenade behind him as he ran out of the building.

The prisoners ran for the trucks as the drivers donned blue arm bands and raced to hand out weapons. The entire escape was over in minutes.

The Germans had been caught completely off guard. It wasn't long before the remaining Germans were prisoners and the prisoners had become guards.

"Sarge! Sarge!"

The men of K Company gathered around Saunders, excited to see him.

"We thought you were dead!" Someone called.

"Not quite." He tried to duck the slaps to his back.

"Stand down men!" Lt. Hanley pushed his way through the circle. "He was shot in the back, remember? Let's not be too rough on him." The men dropped their hands hurriedly.

"Sorry Sarge." They chorused.

Hanley grinned at Saunders. "Welcome back."

Saunders returned the grin.

"What now L.T.?"

"Now we go get some payback. This time we have the element of surprise. I have to go talk to the Major. Care to join me?"

Hanley and Saunders went to find the Major. They found him talking to Sam Troy. They introduced Lt. Hanley who produced the packet containing their orders. Handing them to the Major, he explained the situation as it had been explained to him.

"We took out their radio before they could get a message out. They don't know your POWs are free and armed. The plan was to wait for them to attack our lines then hit them from behind. If we can break the line, the attack will fail. My men and I are at your command Sir." Hanley waited for the Major to make a decision.

"I appreciate all your effort Lieutenant. I must admit, when I first heard the plan I was skeptical of its likelihood of success. But I've got to admit, you pulled it off beautifully. I think it's time we gave those krauts a taste of their own medicine."

"Here,here." A captain behind him agreed.

"The trucks are here. The men are here. The weapons are here." The Lieutenant reported. "Let's do this."

The Major and his officers studied the packets that Hanley had delivered as the men were loaded into the trucks. They needed extra trucks so they commandeered some from the Germans. A cheer went up as the first truck rolled out of the prison camp headed for the American lines.

6. Chapter 6

**The Hit 'em Back Raid **

Chapter 6

"McConnell, take your squad and circle around to the left." Lt. Hanley was using an old farmhouse as a command post.

"Sir."

"What is it McConnell?"

"I was thinking Sir." Hanley waited impatiently for McConnell to continue. "Since Saunders is back, I was wondering if you wanted to put him back in charge of his squad."

"It's your squad now Mac." Hanley stated quietly.

"No Sir. Only on paper Lieutenant. They never really accepted me. They belong to Saunders. And to be perfectly honest Sir, I never felt quite right taking his place. He's a hard act to follow. I was willing to try, but now that he's backâ€¦|."

Hanley bit his lip before nodding. "Okay McConnell. I'll tell Saunders. The guys didn't give you a hard time did they?"

"No." McConnell answered honestly. "They're good guys and good soldiers, they just missed their sargent."

"Alright. You can stay here and help me coordinate the attack." Hanley called Saunders in to give him the news and tell him where he and his men were needed.

Leaving the Lieutenant, Saunders hurried to get his men into position.

"Hey Sarge. What's up?" Cage called as he saw Saunders hurrying their way.

"Did you guys give McConnell trouble?"

"No." Cage answered. "Not even as much as we give you."

"Well he just stepped down as your sargent. I'm in charge again. Saddle up!" Saunders led his men up behind the Germans who were concentrating on the American lines in front of them. They could place the Germans positions by the sound of their weapons. Saunders and his men crept closer. They were about to attack when Saunders realized that the sound of American guns would give their surprise away. He pulled back and held an impromptu meeting. "If we can get hold of some German guns we can fire from back here and they won't know who's firing. We need to try to get some of their weapons."

"I got this Sarge." Cage crawled ahead to find a German who was separated from the others. Pulling his knife, he snuck up behind him and slit his throat. Using his gun, it was fairly easy to pick off more Germans and confiscate their weapons. With the squad armed with German weapons they picked off the enemy without alerting them to American presence.

Cage took a few more out with his knife while Littlejohn broke the neck of one about to warn of their presence. Sawyer was caught between two soldiers who had recognized his American uniform. He shot

one between the eyes but had to duck as the other one opened fire. Billy saw his dilemma and shot the second one. The Germans were starting to fall back. Saunders didn't want his men to be overrun so he ordered an all-out attack, no more sneaking around. The surprised Germans tried to retreat but that drove them into the American line they had attacked earlier. Surrounded, they chose to surrender.

The rescued POWs were welcomed by their comrades on the line. Their contributions had turned the tide in the battle. The German push was repelled with heavy losses on their side. The Americans had sustained light casualties. Even the areas not reinforced had stubbornly held their positions and refused to give any ground. The rescue of the POWs was considered a success.

Two days laterâ€¦

"Well I have to admit Sargent, things are never dull when you're around." Hanley shook hands with Troy as they said their good-byes.

"Thanks, I think. You know no one would invite us back if we were boring." Troy laughed.

"I don't think you have to worry about that Sargent." Hanley looked around. "Where are your men?"

"Saying good-bye to yours. They've kind of gotten attached to them. Hitch and Tully especially. We usually work alone and it's kind of nice to work with someone else once in a while. We are kind of particular though. They enjoy working with your guys."

"The feeling is mutual Sargent. My men have sort of adopted them too. Feel free to call on us againâ€¦"

",,,,,if we ever get back this way." Troy finished for him.

Hanley laughed. "Sargent Saunders is going to drive you to the airport. He volunteered for the duty. Funny thingâ€¦ he never volunteers for anything." Hanley frowned in thought. "He'll meet you at camp."

"Thanks Lieutenant, I'd better not keep him waiting. The rainy season is about over in North Africa. Colonel Wilson is going to be finding a lot of work for us. Take care Lieutenant."

"You too Sargent."

Saunders was quiet on the ride to the airport. As they drew near he seemed to be lost in thought.

"That's some deep thinking you're doing. Anything you want to talk about?" Troy sat next to Saunders and watched his face.

"I need to thank you. I was looking at spending the rest of the war in one of those camps." Saunders stole a glance at Troy.

"I doubt that. You would have found a way to return to your squad. Some soldiers just can't be kept locked up."

"Well thanks anyway. You knowâ€¦if you ever get back this

wayâ€| "

"â€|.ask for you." Troy laughed.

End
file.